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ABSTRACT

This report describes the implementation of the DC 21st Century Community Learning Center (DC 21st CCLC) After-School Program between October 1999 and May 2000, as well as the implications of current implementation for continued evaluation of the program. The report is also designed to inform Children and Youth Investment Partnership Investment activities, of which the DC 21st CCLC program is a part. The study was based on interviews with the 10 program coordinators and student participants at 10 DC 21st CCLC sites (between 7 and 12 students at each site). The investigation revealed that many key elements of the program have been implemented at all sites, with positive student reactions to activities, but lower than expected student enrollment. Appendixes contain a description of program activity characteristics and the program coordinator interview protocol. (Author/SLD)

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Formative Report on the DC 21st Century Community Learning Center After-School Program

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Abstract

This report describes the implementation of the DC 21st Century Community Learning Center (DC 21st CCLC) After-School Program between October 1999 and May 2000, as well as the implications of current implementation for continued evaluation of the program. The report is also designed to inform Children and Youth Investment Partnership activities, of which the DC 21st CCLC program is a part. This report is based on interviews with program coordinators and student participants at the 10 DC 21st CCLC sites. The investigation revealed that many key elements of the program have been implemented at all sites, with positive student reactions to activities but lower-than-expected student enrollment.

About This Report

The purpose of this report is to describe implementation of the DC 21st Century Community Learning Center (DC 21st CCLC) After-School Program between October 1999 and May 2000, as well as the implications of the current implementation for further evaluation of the program. This cross-site analysis is based on what was reported by student participants and Assistant Principals[1] to Urban Institute researchers during visits to each of the 10 DC 21st CCLC sites.[2] The report is intended to provide useful information to DC 21st CCLC staff,[3] particularly regarding issues to be considered for continued evaluation of the program, and to the DC Children and Youth Investment Partnership stakeholders, to inform their broader effort.

Information used to write this report was collected from the following sources:

- *Review of documents*. The researcher team reviewed the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) proposal for the DC 21st CCLC program, which was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in 1999, as well as each school's after-school program proposal to DCPS. The team also reviewed the DCPS Performance Report for the program, submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in April 2000.

- *Semi-structured interviews with the 10 Assistant Principals who coordinate the DC 21st CCLC programs at their schools*. These interviews took place at the sites between April 27 and May 16, 2000, and were conducted by two-member research teams from the Urban Institute. The interviews lasted approximately one hour and covered program implementation at the site. In some cases, follow-up phone calls were made to gather additional information.[4]

- *Semi-structured focus-groups with between 7 and 12 students at each DC 21st CCLC site*. These focus-groups occurred on the same days as the interviews with Assistant Principals. The focus-groups lasted approximately 30 minutes and covered the students' participation and their impressions of the program, including their perceptions of potential benefits to them.

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[1] These Assistant Principals are school administrators who are expected to work full-time for the DC 21st CCLC program, with encouragement to take on school-time responsibilities if it helps them carry out their after-school responsibilities. They were given the status of "Assistant Principal" in order to have authorization to keep the buildings open after hours. One of the individuals responsible for an after-school program is not a full-time Assistant Principal. She was appointed late in the year to run the program upon the resignation of the appointed Assistant Principal and is a Library Media Specialist part-time during the day. The schools also have regular Assistant Principals not directly involved in the DC 21st CCLC programs.

[2] The 10 schools operating DC 21st CCLC programs during the 1999-2000 school year were Charles Hart Middle School, Eliot Junior High School, Francis Junior High School, Garnet-Patterson Middle School, P.R. Harris Educational Center, Kramer Middle School, MacFarland Middle School, R.H. Terrell Junior High School, Shaw Junior High School, and Sousa Middle School.

[3] The Director of the DC 21st CCLC is Howard M. Brown. The Program Manager is Saundra Handy.

[4] Protocols for the interviews with the Assistant Principals and the student focus-groups are provided in Appendix B.

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- *Informal observations of program activities at many of the sites*. The researchers made short, informal observations of program facilities and students participating in program activities. These observations were intended to enhance the researchers' sense of program implementation in a preliminary and general fashion.

- *Informal meetings and discussions with the DCPS staff*. These discussions were held between June 1999[5] and May 2000 and covered aspects of program and evaluation planning. After all the site visits were completed, researchers conducted a two-hour meeting with DCPS staff to clarify implementation issues. DCPS staff also provided feedback on the plans for the site visits.

Urban Institute researchers used the information reported to them during the interviews and focus-groups to write individual reports on each school site's program. They developed key categories to organize the individual site reports and determine which implementation issues cut across several sites.

Section I of this report provides relevant background information about the program. Section II describes the program goals and the general model for implementation at the school sites. Section III gives an overview of how the program is being implemented at the school sites, based on the interviews conducted for this evaluation. Section IV explores key implementation issues that may be of interest to program management. Finally, Section V discusses issues to consider for future program evaluation.

I. Program Background

The District of Columbia has had a long history of many different organizations implementing after-school activities.[6] Starting in 1997, however, a large number of stakeholders gathered together to form a partnership, called the DC Children and Youth Investment Partnership (DCCYIP), aimed at coordinating youth activities in the District. The goal of this partnership is to see that all youth receive a "seamless web" of services, both during and after school, that help them grow up to be healthy and productive adults.[7]

To accomplish this goal, the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), in partnership with a number of groups, including DC Agenda and the then-forming DC Children and

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[5] The evaluation contract was not finalized until March of 2000, but Urban Institute staff met with DCPS staff several times before that date.

[6] Many schools had individual after-school activities, such as sports and clubs; the DC Department of Employment Services and DC Department of Recreation has been offering after-school and summer activities (including employment opportunities) for youth; and many other organizations have been operating additional services.

[7] By "seamless web," the partnership means a set of opportunities that could keep youth occupied from the time they finish school to the time their parents pick them up from school (around 6:30 p.m.). See Landberg (1999) for a description of other goals of this partnership.

Youth Investment Partnership, proposed establishing programs in 10 middle/junior high schools with high need for such services.[8] Each proposed program included after-school, summer, Saturday, and adult evening sub-programs. This report focuses on the after-school sub-program.[9]

II. Program Goals and Implementation Design

The proposal for the DC 21st CCLC program to the U.S. Department of Education described three major goals:

1) to offer significant, expanded learning opportunities for children, youth, and adults in the local school community;
2) to help middle-school youth meet or exceed state standards in reading and mathematics; and
3) to reduce substance abuse and teen violence (DCPS, 1999).[10]

Specific program objectives and expected outcomes for youth were included in the DC 21st CCLC proposal, updated in the Memorandum of Understanding for this evaluation, and updated again by Eric Bruns on behalf of the Evaluation Group.[11] These are summarized below in Figure 1.

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[8] Need was determined based on factors such as poverty and test scores of students at these schools.

[9] The summer sub-program is scheduled to start in June of 2000, and the Saturday and adult sub-programs are scheduled to begin in the fall of 2000.

[10] More detailed lists of goals are provided in DCPS (1999) and DCPS (2000).

[11] This is a group of stakeholders helping to oversee the evaluation of the DC 21st CCLC program. They include Howard Brown, Sandy Handy, and Joyce Jamison of the DC Public Schools; Connie Spinner and Keith Watson of the DC Youth Investment Trust Corporation; Carrie Thornhill of DC Agenda; Eric Bruns of the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health; Janet Reingold of Reingold Associates; and Duncan Chaplin, Jacqueline Raphael, and Calvin Johnson of the Urban Institute.

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Figure 1
Outcomes for After-School and Out-of-School Programs
D.C.'s 21st Century Community Learning Center Initiative

Process measures	Interim Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
• Quality of reading and math instruction • Integration between education, health, social services, and rec. programs • Presence/quality of intergenerational programs • Presence/quality of technical training • Presence/quality of substance abuse counseling, violence prevention, pregnancy prevention, and career exploration programs • Linkages to other organizations providing services • Active participation by community stakeholders • Levels of participation in program components • Levels of community and volunteer participation* • Adherence to standards* • Quality of TA and training* • Communication and interaction between youth-serving agencies*	• Increased ability to participate in fitness activities • Increased participation in structured intergenerational activities • Increased understanding of nutrition • Increased understanding of dangers of substance abuse • Increased understanding of dangers of teen pregnancy • Increased understanding of methods to avoid violence • Increased ability to work cooperatively toward a goal • Increased school attendance • Increased interaction between youths and community • Increased technofluency • Increased self-esteem** • Increased aspirations** • Increased engagement** • Increased access to technology**	• Improved reading and math ability • Decreased substance use • Decrease teen pregnancy • Decreased incidence of violence in the community • Improved school grades • Decreased dropout rate • Decrease in juvenile misdemeanors and felonies • Decrease in other negative behaviors**

Taken from "Measures and Outcomes for After- and Out-of-School Strategies: A scan of local and national strategies and evaluation documents" by Eric Bruns (April 6, 2000) which is based on DCPS's 1999 grant application to the Dept. of Ed., Urban Institute's evaluation proposals; MOU between DCPS - DCCYIP
Italics indicate measures/outcomes that are implied in program documents, rather than explicitly listed.
*Implied in MOU between DCCYIP and DCPS (Appendix to 21CCLC grant application).
** Implied in Urban Institute evaluation proposals.

To achieve these goals at the school sites, DCPS staff established a flexible design for implementation of the program. A well-defined template required that each site deliver offerings in each of the following areas, called "components":

- Education (reading, math, and technofluency);
- Sports/health (physical and mental well-being);
- Arts (visual and performing); and
- Community service.

Within this component framework, Assistant Principals were instructed to work with school staff, students, and community members to identify and deliver activities that served the needs and interests of the local student population. Most Assistant Principals selected DCPS teachers (typically from the school site, but sometimes from other schools), called "facilitators," who conducted specific student activities at their sites.

Assistant Principals were charged specifically with involving local businesses and community leaders, particularly those interested in or working directly with youth, in planning and/or implementing the after-school program. Each Assistant Principal was also responsible for forming a Neighborhood Advisory Council that would provide community input on the after-school, summer, and Saturday sub-programs.

Each site submitted a proposal describing its plans for implementation of its after-school program. These proposals varied in completeness, but most described activities in all four of the components described above, specified the hours during which activities would be provided, gave target goals for the number of students that would be served, and described very broad student outcomes that they would attempt to achieve.

III. Summary of Implementation

During site visits, Assistant Principals and student focus-group participants reported on the extent to which the program had been implemented at the sites. Below is a summary of the information gathered in these interviews. We discuss general information, program staffing and coordination, program procedures, and, finally, students' perspectives on the program.

General Information

One challenge to program implementation cut across all school sites. Although U.S. Department of Education funds for the DC 21st CCLC program were awarded to the District government in June 1999, Congressional oversight rules prohibited access to these funds until late February 2000. While it was possible to launch the after-school

programs in 10 DCPS middle schools in October and November of 1999,[12] a number of aspects planned for the after-school programs could not be fully implemented:

- Direct instruction in reading and mathematics;
- Development of technology and academic skills on DC 21st CCLC computers;[13]
- Substance abuse, pregnancy, and violence prevention activities;
- Intergenerational activities;
- Educational and entertainment field trips; and
- Hiring of program assistants at each site to help manage the program.

Yet despite the funding delays, Assistant Principals and student focus-group participants reported student activities being conducted in all four of the key components (education, sports/health, arts, and community service) at nearly every site, as shown in Table 1 below.

[12] Pursuant to the original grant proposal, the facilitators were paid using other DC government funding. This turned out to be a block grant for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program which was funneled through the Office of Early Childhood Development of the District of Columbia. The Assistant Principals were paid using DCPS funds, to be reimbursed by the DC21st CCLC grant when those funds became available.

[13] One site did receive and use DC 21st CCLC computers in its after-school program.

I. Table 1 – Reported Program Activities By Component and Site

School	Education	Sports/ Health	Arts	Community Service	Other Components	Activities Listed in June 2000 Performance Report
Site 1	"Drop-in Center," Computer Activities[14]	Softball, basketball, baseball, board games	Arts and Crafts, "Stepperettes", Drums	School beautification, crafts for nursing home		NONE
Site 2	Spanish Club, Cyber Club, computer software	Ping Pong, volleyball, basketball, bowling	Cooking and Sewing Club, Photography, Arts and Crafts	Helping out in neighborhood	Ladies of Distinction	Honors Literature and Math, Cyber, Ladies of Distinction, Spanish, Photography, Art, Computer Technology, Cooking/Sewing, Community Service
Site 3	Homework Center, "Jump Start" for SAT-9, Computer Club, WWW usage, email, data processing (IBM)	Softball, jump rope, chess, ice skating, board games	Drama Club, and Arts & Crafts	School beautification, cards for nursing home residents, reading to elementary students, Easter egg hunt for neighborhood kids	For Ladies Only (FLO Girls)	Integrated Education, Nutrition/Health, Technolog; School & Recreation, Literature Education, Community Service
Site 4	Journal Writing, Homework Center, computer software, Computer Repair, Computer Technology	Tae-Bo, jump rope, board games	Woodworking, Arts & Crafts, Step Team, Drum/Marching Band, Ballet	Cards for nursing home, school beautification		NONE
Site 5	Optional tutorial reading and math, Internet usage, computer games	Rollerskating, soccer, basketball, board games, cards	Arts and Crafts, Creative Arts (drama and writing), Music Arts (karaoke and dance)	Decorated something for hospital, interacted with nursing home residents		NONE
Site 6	Homework Center, computer games	Jump rope, basketball, rollerskating	Quilt making, woodshop, ballroom dancing, band	Woodshop students creating kiosk for senior citizens' home		Tutorials, Computer Assisted Math, Sports, Board Games, Wellness, Tech Club, Recreation

NOTE: All programs use the Apple platform except where noted.

[14] In nine sites, computer activities were conducted on computers already existing at the schools. One site did receive DC program comptuers and used them during the after-school program.

School	Education	Sports and Wellness	Arts	Community Service	Other Components	Activities Listed in June 2000 Performance Report
Site 7	Tutoring Center, sign language, computer software	Board games, weight-lifting, Tae-Bo, jump rope, basketball, softball	Culinary arts, modeling (runway), performing arts, creative arts, band, voice/piano	Mentor/assist young children, participate in events for seniors	Entrepreneur Program, Beautiful Black Pearls (discussion group on issues facing adolescents, mostly girls)	Education, Extended Library, Technology, Fitness, Music/Arts, Sports
Site 8	Homework Center (now dropped), Computer Technology	Board games, Tae-Bo, weight-lifting, roller skating	Dance, modeling (runway), drama, instrumental music, visual arts, concert choir, arts and crafts	Field cleaning on school/rec. center grounds (community service component leader not in place yet.)	Teen Summit	Homework Center (Reading, Math, Social Studies, extended library hours, computer and internet in library), Sport/Fitness (basketball, swimming, tennis, tai chi, tae bo and nutrition), Community Service, Art, Concert Choir, Educational Tech, Modeling/Dancing/ Music, Board Games
Site 9	Homework Center, Computer Technology – email, Internet, games (Oracle network)	Soccer, step team, cheerleading, track, basketball	Arts and crafts, choir	NONE	Leadership Club, Health and Nutrition	NONE
Site 10	Homework Center, Computer Technology	Weight-lifting, putt-putt golf, golf (real course), swimming, bowling, roller skating, archery, basketball	Culinary arts, arts and crafts, graphic arts (photography)	School beautification, cards and food for nursing home		Education Technology, Exercise/Wellness, Culinary Arts, Graphic Arts, Community Service

NOTE: All programs use the Apple platform except where noted.

The variety of activities offered across sites suggests that Assistant Principals tailored program offerings to meet local needs and the capabilities of staff. Several Assistant Principals discussed their students' interests as a factor in deciding what activities to offer. In addition, as mentioned above, the programs were not completely open-ended. The framework established by DCPS staff provided a structure to ensure that programs were well-rounded, with education, sports/health, arts, and community service offerings.[15]

During this initial startup period, sites did not consistently serve their target number of students. This issue is discussed further in the Section III, Capacity and Utilization.

Program Staffing and Coordination

Assistant Principals indicated that they felt well-qualified to supervise the program at their sites. Seven of the 10 Assistant Principals reported having worked previously in some capacity at their sites for at least 10 years, three between 17 and 30 years. They reported that their previous responsibilities brought them into contact with many families from the community. The other three Assistant Principals were new to their schools but had worked for many years in education, often in roles that connected them to the community (e.g., attendance officer, social worker, special education teacher). Several of the Assistant Principals reported working in after-school programs that existed before the DC 21st CCLC program was initiated, both at their schools and other schools.

Assistant Principals indicated that they had created solid teams to staff the program, including facilitators (between three and fourteen) and educational aides. Most Assistant Principals had personally recruited the facilitators for their after-school programs, and they sought staff with flexible skills (in order to do several types of activities with students) and the ability to nurture and motivate students. Several specifically recruited facilitators who could address students' needs, such as computer literacy (e.g., technology coordinators) and mathematics (e.g., an "extra" mathematics teacher to address low student test scores). At least some of the educational aides in the after-school programs also worked at the school during the day and were considered well-connected to the students.

Assistant Principals reported very positive working relationships with their program staff, school principals, and school staff.

Most Assistant Principals met informally or individually with their facilitators on an "as-needed" basis, or in brief group meetings during the after-school program (once a week or once a month). Some Assistant Principals reported meeting with facilitators during staff

[15] Section IV introduces other issues relevant to student activity offerings.

development days and communicating through memos as well. There were, however, some challenges related to program staffing, discussed in Section IV of this report.

Assistant Principals reported good working relationships with their school principals and the rest of the school staff. For example, one Assistant Principal reported reviewing students' grades with teachers and arranging a required hour of tutoring in the after-school program for students whose grades were slipping.

Program Procedures

Assistant Principals were responsible for publicizing the program, establishing operational procedures (including a student schedule), and involving the community in program planning and implementation. They carried out these responsibilities in ways that reflected local needs and resources.

Publicizing the Program
Assistant Principals publicized the program by speaking directly to students, making announcements over the school intercom, posting notices about the program in the school building, talking about the program at PTA and YMCA meetings, and/or sending mailings (e.g., letters, flyers, and/or brochures) to parents. At several sites, facilitators (who were also regular school teachers) helped recruit students to the program, and at one site, school counselors referred students to the program during home visits and conducted a telephone calling campaign using an automatic dialing system.

Establishing Operational Procedures
Assistant Principals implemented procedures for maintaining discipline and student safety in the program. They and the facilitators typically sought to teach students how to discuss and peacefully resolve conflict, although the Assistant Principals reserved and sometimes used the right to "suspend" disruptive students from the program. Students at most of the sites noted that program staff were very fair, as well as more forgiving and slower to judge and punish students than teachers in "regular" school. Assistant Principals also reported on various safety measures at their programs, including the presence of a security guard and metal detectors at the school's main door. (It was unclear whether the metal detectors were operational during the after-school hours.) Assistant Principals required written parental permission for students to participate in the program, and most established simple procedures to ensure that non-participants did not "hang out" in the school or on the fields during after-school program operation. Some schools locked the doors during the program. One program had the local police come by when the program dismissed students; another occasionally had facilitators drive students home.

> **Assistant Principals implemented program schedules, activities, and procedures based on local needs and resources.**

Program schedules were devised and revised by Assistant Principals based on the DCPS staff's framework, as well as student attendance, the availability of facilitators, and student interest. At most sites, students participated in two or three activities each afternoon, with activities offered in all four components every week or two. Several programs give students a "choice" day, typically Fridays, when students may select the activities in which they wish to participate. (Across sites, the degree of student choice about activities throughout the week varied considerably, as discussed in Section IV.)

Involving the Community

Assistant Principals reported moderate levels of collaboration with two or more community organizations, including neighborhood businesses, churches, and community organizations, local religious groups, foundations (e.g., "For the Love of Children"), sports facilities (e.g., ice-skating rinks), and speakers (e.g., from the local radio station). These organizations donated services and/or facilities, staffing, and/or transportation to the sites. At the "high end" of community involvement, students at one site were trained in entrepreneurial skills by local business owners, and students at another site received individual tutoring from local college student volunteers.

All but one Assistant Principal reported having formed their Neighborhood Advisory Councils. Meetings had been scheduled but not yet conducted at the time of the site visits. These councils were composed of business owners, parents who had expressed interest in the program, teachers and school principals, and people from government agencies and other community/non-profit organizations that serve children. Assistant Principals reported specific goals planned for these meetings. As for parental involvement, Assistant Principals and students reported that parents were not yet very involved in the after-school programs, but several had plans to engage more parents.

Students' Perspectives on the Program

"This program is about togetherness."

Interviews with student focus-group participants confirmed that progress had been made toward achieving several of the broad program goals. At all but one site, students stated that they enjoyed the program and that they had participated in activities that they would not have been able to do outside the program.[16] Sports activities were particularly popular among many students -- but across sites the most surprising consistently positive report was for the individualized academic attention students received from facilitators. These student reports came without prompting from the researchers, and, in some cases, even after researchers made a point of telling students they need not feel obligated to discuss "academic" learning when speaking of program benefits. The students suggested that they

[16] Assistant Principals also suggested that some of these activities would not have been available to students in the absence of the DC 21st CCLC program; for example chess, fashion and talent shows, computer repair, and ballet lessons.

had difficulty getting such homework assistance. Said one: "It's no use staying home. Here I learn more and do better at school." Said another: "I need help with math. My family can't help, so teachers can." When probed about the kind of help that was given, students emphasized that facilitators gave them several explanations for difficult homework problems and spent extra time making sure they understood their work. "I wasn't all that sharp with my math skills before I came here, but now I'm much better," explained one female student. Some students at one site spoke highly of the work they did preparing for the Stanford-9, and others, at another site, mentioned specific computer programs that helped them with mathematics and reading skills.

Students were also especially positive about their interactions with their peers, interactions they said were markedly different from "regular" school. Students specifically mentioned the opportunity to interact with students from other grade levels. "In school we are separated by grade, but here we get to hang out with kids from other grades," one student pointed out. Getting to know "different sides" of students was mentioned. Another student explained, "I learned friendship, and some people I didn't know, I got to know them."

Additionally, students in nearly all sites reported meaningful interactions with the adult program staff. Students said the adults cared about them. "It's like a family," said one of the program. "You can tell [the staff] anything," said another. The facilitators "are interesting. You can have a conversation with them," commented a male participant. Students also liked being able to interact with teachers in a non-classroom setting, such as playing sports. One student spoke with pride about how he had taught a female facilitator to play basketball. "I just can't believe they'll act... playful like they do. After school they act real different," explained another. Picking up on the change in a teacher's demeanor, another student commented, "He was kind of mean… but then after school when we were playing basketball, he changed."

> "I just can't believe [the facilitators] will act...playful like they do."

Focus-group participants commented on the openness between staff and students — particularly that they were encouraged to provide feedback about the program and to talk with staff about whatever they wanted to discuss. They appeared to genuinely like and respect the Assistant Principals and most of the facilitators. Even at the one site where students complained that the program had become "boring," they had felt comfortable giving this feedback to the Assistant Principal. Students at several sites said the program fosters unity. Said one student, "This program is about togetherness."

Students at several schools mentioned that the program helps to keep them off the streets. When asked about what they would be doing if they were not in the program, students often said they would be hanging out on the streets, doing "nothing," watching television, sleeping, or participating in unsupervised recreational or academic activities. Some

students said they would join other after-school centers, go to a parent's workplace, or visit with friends or relatives.

IV. Implementation Issues

Several implementation issues emerged from interviews with Assistant Principals and students that may be of interest to program management for future implementation of the program. These issues concern capacity and utilization; staffing; and variation in intensity and duration of the intervention (or treatment). Each of these issues is discussed below.

Capacity and Utilization

During the initial seven-month startup period, the program reached almost 70 percent of its overall enrollment goal but was serving less than half of this goal on a regular basis. Table 2 lists Assistant Principals' estimates of the number of students served at least once, average daily program attendance, program targets, total school enrollment, and estimated percentages of students at the schools who were served on a daily basis. Table 2 also provides grade levels served and hours that the programs operated, as reported by the Assistant Principals.

Table 2 – Estimates of Students Served

School	Estimated Number of Students Served at Least Once	Estimated Average Daily Attendance	Target Number of Students to Be Served Regularly*	Total School Enrollment SY1999-2000**	Estimated Percentage of Total School Enrollment Served Daily	Grade Level of Students Served in After-School Program*	Hours of Operation
Site 1	117	67 **	60-120	273	24.5%	6-8	M-F, 3:30-6:30
Site 2	100	70-80	100-125	310	22.6 – 25.8%	5-8	M-F, 3:30-6:30
Site 3	100	40-60	Not provided	347	11.5 – 17.3%	6-8	M-F, 3:30-6:30
Site 4	289	150-175	200	720	20.8 – 24.3%	Pre-K-8	M-Th, 3:30-6:30, F, 3:30-5:30
Site 5	125	40-45	100	411	9.7 – 10.9%	7-9	M-F, 3:30-6:30
Site 6	225	100	Not provided	476	21.0%	6-8	M-F, 3:30-6:30
Site 7	100	69-100	200	405	17.0 – 24.7%	7-9	M-F, 3:30-6:30
Site 8	160	80-100	200	590	13.6 – 16.9%	7-9	M-Th, 3:30-6:30, F, 3:30-6:00
Site 9	100	40-45	200	412	9.7 – 10.9%	6-8	M-F, 3:30-6:30
Site 10	55	35-47	Not provided	284 ***	12.3 – 16.5%	7-9	M-F, 3:30-6:30
Total	1371	691 – 819	2000****	4228	16.3 – 19.4%	—	—

* Information contained in school site proposals.

** Information obtained from the DCPS staff's June 2000 Performance Report.

*** From telephone conversation with school secretary on 5 June 2000.

**** From the DCPS DC 21st CCLC Program Proposal.

This table suggests that of those sites with student targets, only one (Site 1) had regular (i.e., average daily) attendance as high as its enrollment target — and only at the low end of its target range. Four sites had daily attendance less than half of the enrollment target for the program, and overall the DC 21st CCLC program appears to be operating regularly at less than half the expected goal of 2,000 students.

It is not clear how to best interpret the target numbers. The individual DC 21st CCLC school proposals specified enrollment goals or the size of the "target" population but did not specifically mention that these goals were for average daily attendance. Thus, they achieved 70 percent of their stated goals. On the other hand, they could have achieved this by having each child attend only once. Clearly, this would not be an acceptable outcome. In addition, DCPS staff told us that the goals were for average daily attendance. Based on this criteria, all but one site missed its average daily attendance target.

All but one site missed their average daily attendance targets. Assistant Principals suggested several plausible factors that may have inhibited greater student participation.

While the expected level of daily attendance is not clear, it does appear that all sites have higher capacity than daily attendance.[17] This is not unusual. Nationally, Seppanen et al. (1993) estimate that before- and after-school programs are at about 60 percent of capacity. In DC 21st CCLC sites, the Assistant Principals suggested several plausible factors that may have inhibited greater student participation in their programs:

1. *Family needs*. According to Assistant Principals, many families in these communities need their children at home to babysit or do other chores.

2. *Distance*. Assistant Principals at two sites said that some students live far enough away from the school to adversely affect student participation.

3. *Lack of initial funding*. During interviews, some Assistant Principals suggested that the initial lack of funding prevented them from offering popular activities that had already been "advertised." They felt that this change may have disappointed some students and caused them not to participate or to drop out of the program.

4. *Other after-school activities*. At several sites, after-school programs in sports, pregnancy prevention, and other areas (including one general after-care program funded by HUD and another operated by a nearby school) may have reduced participation in the DC 21st CCLC program.

[17] We asked Assistant Principals if they could accommodate additional children in their program and all answered in the affirmative.

5. *Lack of Student Interest:* Although it was not mentioned often, a lack of student interest in programs comprised of structured activities or, specifically, in the activities being offered is another potential reason for non-participation.

The first explanation for lower student participation (family needs) may be beyond the program's control, although increasing parent involvement and providing services for adults may affect the degree to which parents show interest in the program. The second explanation for lower participation (distance) was addressed by a number of Assistant Principals who suggested a need for better transportation alternatives for the students. The third issue (lack of initial funding) will likely be addressed by the start of the upcoming summer and school-year sub-programs, when full funding is expected to be in place from the beginning.

The fourth reported explanation — "competition" with other after-school activities and/or non-school-related after-school programs — suggests that the lack of participation in DC 21st CCLC programs may not mean that youth are being left without structured activities. However, even if youth are active in some activities, the DC 21st CCLC program can still enhance their well-being by helping to provide the "seamless web" of activities, going from when they finish school to when they leave for home. A number of Assistant Principals reported making proactive efforts to help ensure that this seamless web was extended to help even those youth already engaged in other activities.[18]

The fifth explanation may be the most difficult to address. All Assistant Principals reported gathering student feedback about activity offerings, but much of this input probably came well after the programs had been launched. Some Assistant Principals instituted a "point system" (points for trips and special activities) to encourage students to participate each day for the full three hours and to encourage other students to participate. Some also are collaborating with other groups offering after-school programs. A serious concern about many after-school programs that is likely relevant for DC as well is whether the program can reach those students who are most at risk of failure and, perhaps, most in need of structured activities.[19]

Staffing Issues

Interviews with Assistant Principals revealed several staffing issues that may affect future implementation of the program.

[18] At some sites, these administrators worked with school staff to find ways to incorporate or "blend" the other after-school programs into the DC 21st CCLC program. They permitted the students involved in extracurricular activities to "roll into" the after-school program after their other activities had ended and sometimes took after-school students to the school's sports event to promote group cohesion.

[19] Olsen (2000), in her critique of after-school programs, mentions this issue.

1. *Several Assistant Principals expressed concern about how their roles were defined at the school.* In some cases, tension arose between the Assistant Principal's school-day and DC 21st CCLC responsibilities. One Assistant Principal identified her daytime responsibilities, required by her school principal, as an obstacle to her carrying out her DC 21st CCLC responsibilities.[20] A second Assistant Principal did not become responsible for the program until January, when the previous Assistant Principal left the school. The new Assistant Principal had a full-time position at the school during the day and was unable to devote sufficient attention to the after-school program. Furthermore, while most Assistant Principals devoted most of their time to planning and coordinating the DC 21st CCLC program, at least two Assistant Principals also carried out significant school-day responsibilities, suggesting that programs do not receive an equal (or possibly a minimal) amount of supervision from Assistant Principals. In addition, several Assistant Principals pointed out that the lack of program assistants complicated management of the program. Two Assistant Principals expressed some annoyance with what they perceived as redundant paperwork required for the DC 21st CCLC program, with one Assistant Principal asking for more time to turn around summer and school-year proposals.

2. *Some Assistant Principals reported concerns or confusion about facilitator staffing.* Several Assistant Principals explained that their facilitators occasionally failed to show up on time for the after-school program. This occurred most often in sites with "off-site" facilitators — typically, teachers from a nearby school. However, after-school faculty meetings also delayed some facilitators.

Several Assistant Principals had wished to hire community artists, performers, and others from outside the DCPS system to expand the range of student activities and exposure to adults in their programs. Assistant Principals had been advised by DCPS staff that, due to DCPS hiring regulations that require additional time to process non-DCPS applicants, they should not — at least for this year's program — try to hire non-DCPS individuals.[21] These Assistant Principals felt limited by having to hire teachers at the school (or, in some cases, from a nearby school).

In addition, some Assistant Principals appeared confused about how to organize staff, particularly regarding the required 1:20 hiring ratio. As explained by DCPS staff, Assistant Principals were to ensure that sites hire approximately one facilitator for every 20 students. If student attendance dropped, Assistant Principals were expected to adjust the number of facilitators accordingly. DCPS staff suggested that Assistant Principals consider sending home facilitators on afternoons when attendance was low (one Assistant Principal reported doing so). This daily adjustment was a guideline, according to DCPS

[20] This Assistant Principal also described her principal as supportive "from a distance" — i.e., he viewed the after-school program as "separate" from the day school and as being solely her responsibility. The school principal had just come to the school this year and had not helped plan the after-school program with the Assistant Principal, as did many of the school principals at the other sites.

[21] DCPS staff noted that if Assistant Principals begin the hiring process earlier next year, non-DC Public School individuals can be hired. In addition, Assistant Principals were encouraged to attend a meeting at Galludet University in May 2000 to meet and hire outside artists who had been cleared through DCPS for the summer subprogram.

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staff, not an absolute program requirement. Yet at least two Assistant Principals believed that the 1:20 ratio was a strict rule. One Assistant Principal thought that activities with less than 20 students were prohibited, and another indicated that she sometimes "broke" the 1:20 ratio "rule" when facilitators failed to show and she had more than 20 students with one facilitator. In addition, two other Assistant Principals chose to eliminate activities with small numbers of students for reasons that may or may not have been related to their perceptions about this ratio.

3. *At some sites, Assistant Principals or students felt that facilitators had difficulty managing students.* In some cases this may have been due to insufficient staff, as two Assistant Principals reported that facilitators occasionally arrived late. The difficulty may also be due to lack of skills or confusion on the part of some facilitators related to their roles and responsibilities in the after-school program. At two sites, students felt that the poor discipline of a small number of students was affecting the program adversely for the others. At one site, focus-group participants explained that these students walked in and out of activities, wandered around the school building, and did whatever they wanted, disrupting program activities. Students at this school indicated that the Assistant Principal was well aware of their feelings about the program.

4. *Several Assistant Principals and student focus-groups indicated a need for more staff to ensure student safety, particularly to get students home safely from the program.* When asked, students interviewed at most of the sites indicated that they felt "safe" while in the after-school program. Table 3 summarizes these comments.

When probed, many students said the presence of a security guard helped them to feel safe. For example, a female student said that if a man wanted to rape her, he couldn't get in because of the security guard. Comments like these made at many sites — although not often this dramatic — reveal that many students felt safer in the school than at their homes. This was also related to the number of people in the after-school program. Said one, "It's better than being in the house by yourself, where you know if somebody breaks through the window, you're the only one in there."

However, students at one site described the presence of a security guard as more of an appearance than a real protection measure, and several Assistant Principals expressed the need for additional security guards. Assistant Principals at two programs operated in large school facilities indicated that they would like an additional security guard. In these schools, someone was needed to wander through the halls occasionally and check for problems. In addition, one of these Assistant Principals explained that she had no back-up when her single security guard was detained during program operation.

Table 3 – Student Perceptions of Safety at Program

School	Students' feelings about safety at the site
Site 1	Feel safe because of security guards and teachers who care
Site 2	Feel safe because bully-type kids from day school aren't part of the after-school program
Site 3	Feel safe because teachers care
Site 4	Feel safe because of security guard and teachers who care
Site 5	Feel safe because fighting is not allowed in building
Site 6	Feel safe because they are with friends and security guard
Site 7	Feel safe because of security guard, locked doors, and teachers who care
Site 8	Feel safe
Site 9	Some feel safe but others do not
Site 10	Feel school was not safe any time of day

Another safety issue identified by Assistant Principals and students was whether students would be safe getting home from the program. Table 4 reveals that these concerns were reported by Assistant Principals and students at a significant number of sites.[22]

Some Assistant Principals reported that this issue was more relevant in the winter, when it was dark by 6:30. It was also a significant issue, Assistant Principals said, at sites where children have a longer distance to travel to get home.

Several Assistant Principals described making efforts to help ensure student safety. One requested and received the support of local police, who come by the school around 6:30 and circle the area around the school. Another Assistant Principal reported feeling comfortable calling the local police about concerns. Another learned that some students were not going directly home after the program and began "checking more closely" on the whereabouts of certain children. One Assistant Principal reported that facilitators sometimes drove students home.

[22] Note that at some sites, Assistant Principals did not discuss safety concerns with the interviewers.

Table 4 – Safety Concerns about Students Getting Home

School	Assistant Principals' concerns about students getting home	Students' concerns about getting home
Site 1	None raised	Students walk home in groups for security
Site 2	Worried about kids walking home at night, suggested a bus to take them home.	Sometimes they feel unsafe esp. when dark. Walk home in groups.
Site 3	None raised	Students did not seem overly concerned about getting home
Site 4	Expressed concern, mentioned security guard won't go up some streets	Do not feel safe walking home.
Site 5	Wants a bus to take kids home	None raised
Site 6	Expressed concern over childrens' safety getting home, wants a bus	None raised
Site 7	None raised	None raised
Site 8	None raised	None raised
Site 9	None raised	Feel it can be very dangerous
Site 10	None raised	Feel it is very dangerous and unsafe

5. *Assistant Principals reported facing challenges in achieving higher levels of community involvement.* The DCPS 21st Century Community Learning Center proposal emphasized that sites were to form collaborative relationships with local community organizations and agencies to help plan and implement the program. However, community involvement has only begun to be established at the sites. Neighborhood Advisory Councils are in their infancy, and some Assistant Principals indicated that it was difficult to find a common meeting time for the members of their Neighborhood Advisory Councils. Limited parental involvement was reported at nearly all of the DC 21st CCLC sites.

Keeping Track of the Treatment

The DCPS staff's flexible framework encouraged sites to offer varying types of activities within each component area (education, sports/health, arts, and community service). More detailed information about this variation is contained in Appendix A of this report. However, researchers also learned that activities were implemented at varying levels across sites, and that records about these variations, as well as data about individual student participation, were not regularly maintained.

Although at most sites several different activities were provided in each of the four components, the intensity and duration of this treatment varied considerably both across and within sites. First, not all of the activities reported at the sites were offered for the same period of time. At some sites, an activity was offered on two to three afternoons a week while at others it was offered every afternoon. Second, certain activities were discontinued at some sites due to low student enrollment or other circumstances. Records of these scheduling changes may not be maintained at all sites. Thus, within and across sites it may be difficult to know in what activities students spent their time.

Third, the extent of choice students can exercise about the activities in which they will participate also varied across sites. Some sites offered students almost complete freedom. And at some sites it is possible for students to selectively "opt out" of activities or even components, whereas at others it is not allowed. At one site, where the student schedule is "fluid," students who participate in other school-sponsored activities and clubs after school are involved only in the Homework Center. That is the extent of these particular students' "treatment" in the DC 21st CCLC program. In contrast, another Assistant Principal managed the schedule so that all students participate in all program components for the same amount of time. Other Assistant Principals devised schedules that fell between these extremes. Friday was designated as "Choice Day" at several programs, during which students participated in their favorite activities. At another site, Fridays were reserved for trips, swimming, and quiet games. At a third site, the Assistant Principal permitted students to choose which activities to participate in for the second period (after the Homework Center) of the afternoon. Afterwards, students were assigned (according to last name) to a physical education activity for the last period.[23]

This variation in the intensity or duration of activities is an important factor in understanding and monitoring the program. Follow-up discussions after the site visits revealed that several Assistant Principals would not easily be able to indicate how many, and which, students participated in which activities during the program, given the flexibility in scheduling at the sites. Such constraints on knowledge about the type of "program" actually being delivered can complicate program management and evaluation. (This issue is discussed further in Section V.)

[23] See Appendix A for more details.

V. Issues to Consider for Future Program Evaluation

Several issues arose during these site visits that are relevant to future program evaluation. These questions include the following:

- Are the research questions appropriate given the treatment and goals?
- Should more data be collected to help with monitoring and evaluation?
- What research methods are appropriate?

We do not have answers to these questions. However, we do feel that our formative study has provided valuable information that may help DC 21st CCLC and DCPS staff as they make decisions in these areas.

Are the research questions appropriate given the treatment and goals?

There are a number of research questions that could be considered. First, should a smaller set of outcomes be considered for an impact evaluation? Second, do we need more information on what the treatment is? Third, should we look at the total number of students served in each school or at the fraction of students served? And finally, should we look at participation in after-school structured activities not organized by the DC 21st CCLC program?

Should a smaller set of outcomes be considered for an impact evaluation? One important issue for future evaluation activities is the fairly long list of expected outcomes and associated measurement instruments contained in the DCPS proposal for the DC 21st CCLC program and updated by Eric Bruns, as shown in Figure 1. Given the evidence we have found suggesting variation across sites in types and intensity of activities, it is likely that the time students spend in at least some components of the program is not significant enough to justify looking for outcomes specific to those components. For instance, it seems unlikely that there will be large impacts on computer skills at this point, given the apparent intensity of these activities at most sites, or in specific arts-related learning, at least at some sites. For this reason, it may be useful to focus the impact evaluation on a small number of measurable outcomes that cut across different component areas and are likely to show an impact no matter what activity the students participated in (e.g., improved student attendance during school, increased cooperative skills among students). Comments made by student focus-group participants point to potential student outcomes related to communication and social skills, conflict resolution, and attitudes toward peers and adults.

Do we need more information on what the treatment is? At this time, it appears difficult to know exactly what the treatment is at program sites. What we do know is the number of students participating — because all of the sites maintain attendance records — and the types of activities in which they are participating. However, student attendance is more complex than is suggested by the attendance records. Several Assistant Principals

indicated that the number of students who leave the program somewhat early is not insignificant; yet to date, only one site records how many students leave early.[24] Two sites reported taking attendance in specific activities as well as general attendance (i.e., keeping track of activities in which students participate).

Should we look at the total number of students served in each school or at the fraction of students served? As currently designed, the DC 21st CCLC program appears to be aimed at encouraging each site to have between 100 and 200 students enrolled in the program. However, school size varies considerably. For this reason, it might make sense to have a goal of a fixed fraction of students per site. This fraction could be chosen so that the total number of students across schools remained at the overall goal of 2000.[25]

Should we look at participation in other after-school structured activities not organized by the DC 21st CCLC program? A major goal of the DC 21st CCLC program is to keep youth active in structured activities. Our formative evaluation suggested that many of the youth in DC CCLC program schools are already engaged in other structured activities after school. It is not clear that these youth are in need of additional services. At the same time, they reduce the pool of students who can be easily recruited into the DC 21st CCLC programs. For this reason, it might be useful to consider looking at the fraction of youth at a school who are participating in any structured activity rather than only looking at the fraction in the DC 21st CCLC program.

Should more data be collected to help with monitoring and evaluation?

Discussion of the questions above will inevitably affect what data are collected. In this regard we think it is important to consider whether more data on student attendance by time and activity, student characteristics, and comparison groups should be collected.

Student attendance by time and activity: Collecting data on student attendance by activity would not be trivial. There were questions in the annual report to the Department of Education suggesting that DCPS attempted to collect such information. However, the resulting data appeared to have been aggregated across all activities for many sites. In addition, the question asked only for the start and end time of each activity (as shown in the annual report) and not for the actual average hours of participation in each activity by students. The latter could be calculated from data on the start and end time of each

[24] Two Assistant Principals reported that not all students remain in the program for the entire afternoon. Some students arrive late due to sports team commitments or other reasons, while others leave early because of family-related or other reasons. According to DCPS staff, it is likely that this occurs at other sites as well.
[25] In order to specify the fraction of children served by the program, it will also be necessary to distinguish between children in the program from the school and those from outside the school. Assistant Principals at two sites indicated that their programs currently serve small numbers of students in the community who do not attend the home school. This may also occur at other sites.

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student's participation in each activity. This would be a more precise measure of the intensity of student involvement in an activity.[26]

Student characteristics: The fraction of students attending the DC 21st CCLC programs varies considerably across schools. This suggests that some programs might be more effective than others at reaching those students most in need of services. Comparing characteristics of students in the program with those of other children in the school would help to determine which types of children a given program was attracting. Characteristics such as level in school, class grades, gender, test scores, discipline problems, special education status, and free-lunch eligibility are probably included in student records kept by each school. This information would also be useful for helping to develop comparison groups, as discussed below. On the other hand, accessing such data might be difficult, given confidentiality concerns, and would depend on whether DCPS staff felt that the potential benefits outweighed the costs.

Comparison groups: The annual report on the DC 21st CCLC program provides information on the participants in the programs but no comparison group. This makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Choosing a comparison group is not-trivial. A number of possibilities come to mind. First, one could compare the participants in the DC 21st CCLC program to non-participants at the same school. This provides the advantage of ensuring that the students have the same school environment, but the disadvantage of comparing students who have chosen to participate with those who have chosen to not participate. Deciding to participate may be an important indicator of underlying strengths of a youth that could have important effects on later outcomes, independent of any effect of the program itself. Having data on the student characteristics described above would help to alleviate this problem to some degree.

Comparing participants to non-participants also has the weakness of ignoring the possible benefits of the program on non-participants. The program could help benefit non-participants if many of the participants would have been more disruptive to other students had they not been involved in the DC 21st CCLC program. The program could also help non-participants by helping to develop a general norm for participation in some type of activity, even if it is not in the DC 21st CCLC program itself.

A second possible comparison to make is between all students in a DC 21st CCLC program school and students in a school without any after-care program. This gets around both of the problems with the first comparison group. By including all students, one is able to estimate effects on both participants and non-participants. In addition, this method avoids using a comparison group that consists only of students who chose to not participate when they had the option. The weakness of this method is that students attending different schools may differ in important ways. This weakness could be

[26] This could matter if, for instance, some activities, such as homework, are scheduled during the first period of the program and many students arrive quite late.

partially overcome with data on student and school characteristics (such as those described earlier).

What research methods are appropriate?

The questions on what data should be collected, in turn, suggest that we may need to reconsider how the data are collected and analyzed. In particular, it may be useful to consider collecting some additional qualitative data, to investigate the possibility of using electronic means to collect more data, and to consider the possibility of using a true experiment to analyze the effect of the program on a select set of outcomes.

Collecting additional qualitative data: If the Evaluation Group decides to pursue one (or both) of the latter two comparison group strategies discussed above, it might be helpful to also do some formative work at the non-DC 21st CCLC sites in order to determine the exact nature of the treatments at those sites.

Collect data electronically: DCPS has told us that they intend to do this. Electronic data collection has a number of potential benefits. First, it will enable DCPS to more easily calculate the numbers currently being reported (total attendance, daily attendance, etc.) Second, electronic data can be used to more easily calculate additional numbers, such as fraction of time students are in large versus small groups. Third, collecting electronic data will greatly facilitate merging in additional data, for instance, on student characteristics currently maintained in school records. On the other hand, it may be difficult to get computers functioning in many schools in a way that would enable a timely and regular collection of data. Indeed, it might be particularly valuable to have information on many of these outcomes from periods before the computers were in place, so that an evaluation could measure changes over time in these outcomes as the computers were introduced.

A true experiment: DCPS has expressed interest in conducting a truly innovative and cutting-edge type of evaluation. One method of accomplishing this goal would be to use a true experiment to estimate the impact of the program on student outcomes. Implementing an experiment is likely to be difficult since many program staff would be reluctant to allow their students to take part in any study that involved denying services to some youth. This concern could be alleviated by comparing the impact of the DC 21st CCLC program with that of the TANF aftercare program. In this way, no youth would be denied services. A number of similar alternatives could be considered.[27] Indeed, it should be noted that the DC Child and Family Services is about to launch a similar experiment to estimate the effect of their services combined with those of community workers compared to the effect of their services alone on outcomes of children currently receiving their services. The Urban Institute is conducting this evaluation. In order to justify conducting such an experiment on the DC 21st CCLC program, it would be

[27] For instance, one could compare interventions using different types of computer learning programs, all within the DC 21st CCLC program, or compare interventions with more and less emphasis on academics in general.

necessary to identify some variation in program implementation that has the potential to be important, but that program staff feel they can vary randomly within certain student populations.

VI. Conclusion

The DC 21st CCLC program is well on its way to full implementation in the District of Columbia. Spearheaded by the DC Public Schools and conducted in cooperation with DC Agenda and the DC Children Investment Trust Corporation, the DC 21st CCLC program introduced comprehensive after-school activities into 10 DC middle and junior high schools by the end of the fall of 1999. These activities built on past after-school efforts by helping to develop a "seamless web" of activities. When fully implemented, this web should help to ensure that students are not left wanting for productive things to do during the hours immediately after their schools close, when many youth become victims of crimes or are involved in activities not conducive to their development.

Many challenges remain. Enrollment is somewhat lower than expected and community involvement has not been achieved as fully as anticipated. However, DCPS staff appear eager to address these challenges in the fall, when the after-school program starts up again.

Continued evaluation and self-monitoring will be key to documenting the implementation and achievements of the program in ways that are useful to the DCPS staff who run the program, to the rest of the DC Children and Youth Investment Partnership, and to individuals involved in helping to design and manage similar programs in other cities. Based on the findings in this report, we recommend that DCPS staff consider a variety of possible methods for continued evaluation, including a random experiment. This would help both to keep the program on the cutting edge and to ensure that future work in this area is based on the best information possible.

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Appendix A: Reports on Characteristics of Program Activities

Appendix A provides greater detail on the characteristics of program activities discussed and, in some cases, observed during initial site visits. The discussion of program activities is divided into program "components" established by DCPS staff to guide the delivery of services to students.

The **education** component, as implemented across sites, was reported to involve primarily homework assistance, with some additional skills development in mathematics and/or language arts, sometimes involving work on computers, as well as various special projects. All sites required that students spend some time, usually at the start of the afternoon, working on school assignments, with individual or group assistance provided by an after-school teacher (hereinafter referred to as "facilitator") as needed.

The amount of time spent on homework assistance varied across sites. At one site with an unusually strong emphasis on the education component the Homework Center is required for students for approximately an hour each afternoon (less time on Fridays). The Assistant Principal at this site also sought the cooperation of the school's sport team coaches to require all team members to attend the Homework Center before coming to practice. At the other sites, students were required to spend less time on homework (30 to 40 minutes). In addition, at several sites the Assistant Principals reported further decreasing or eliminating the time students spent on education work because of fluctuations in students' academic workload over the period of the program and/or because students seemed "saturated" with schoolwork. At one site, the Assistant Principal explained that the education component "is open. We are not forcing it down [the students'] throats. If the students need help, they know they can come to us." At this site, the Assistant Principal estimated that 10-20 percent of students' time was spent on homework, with considerable variation depending on their workload. At the sites where time spent daily on homework was decreased, greater emphasis was placed on the academic component at specific times such as at the end of a grading period, when student demand for help increased, when special projects were due, or to prepare for the Stanford Achievement Test. For example, students and Assistant Principals at several sites reported extending classroom work on science fair projects as the District's deadline for student entries approached.

The DCPS proposal for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers emphasized the use of technology to improve students' academic skills and to develop their technology skills. Although the DC 21st CCLC program could not deliver computers to nine of the sites this year, students and Assistant Principals at all of these sites reported some computer work on existing school computers as part of their after-school programs. Some of this computer activity included academic skills development, use of the Internet and e-mail, word processing, a "Cyber Club," and other activities. In addition, two sites offered extra academic work, at least one including computer games with mathematics content, before the Stanford-9 exam was administered to students.

The **community service** component typically included school beautification activities (e.g., planting on school grounds, decorating the school during holidays) and visits to the elderly at community facilities, often including presentation of student-created cards and similar gifts. Assistant Principals appeared divided about the implementation of this component. One Assistant Principal felt this was the "weakest link" of the program, speculating that students did not understand the abstract concept of community service. (In fact, one goal of this component is to make this concept concrete for students.) At this site, the community service component was fairly minimal. But another Assistant Principal reported that community service was one of the most successful components at the site, with students interviewed at the site expressing enthusiasm about their volunteer work with elderly people. The fact that ninth-graders were able to complete their school's required 100-hour community service commitment through participation in this after-school program component may well have affected the students' participation in community service at this site.

Each site had some variation of a **sports/wellness** component. Some sites conducted structured sports or "wellness" activities, in which students received specific instruction, while others were more loosely constructed, with students given sports equipment and encouraged to play team sports. Researchers observed both large and small groups of students engaged in physical activities in gymnasiums or outdoors on school fields or open areas. At one site a small number of girls were practicing Tae-Bo using a video. Large team sports were usually supervised by more than one adult. At several sites, students were taught stretching exercises and were exposed to physical activities they had not engaged in before, such as Tae-Bo, weight-lifting, and stepping. Basketball was a popular staple at most of the sites, according to Assistant Principals. Other common sports were softball and baseball, as well as soccer at two sites. Various sites also offered double-dutch jump rope, track, cheerleading, golf, archery, ping-pong, and volleyball.

In addition, several sites incorporated board, computer (non-education), and card games into the sports/recreation component. One Assistant Principal pointed out that the board games were extremely popular with students and that many students did not have such games at home. Another Assistant Principal noted that some of these games, such as chess, could help students develop their critical-thinking skills. Students also went on field trips during which they went bowling, roller skating, and ice skating. (Some of these trips involved students from several DC 21st CCLC program sites.) In addition to sports and games, Assistant Principals at several sites reported that students learned about health and wellness through discussions with facilitators. They learned stretches and exercises that could help them stay in shape, for example, and were taught about healthy foods and eating habits during snack time.

Activities in the **arts** also varied among sites. Informal observations of students activities revealed small numbers of students (five to ten) working indoors on art activities. At several sites, students participated in arts and crafts activities. One Assistant Principal pointed out that her school—and many others in the District—no longer offer art

instruction to students during the day. Three sites have included cooking and culinary arts for students. Drama and performing arts activities were offered in several sites. Assistant Principals also reported on different types of dance offered at the various sites (usually one type per site), including ballroom dancing, ballet, hip hop, and modern dance. Some sites offered stepping teams and African drumming activities. In addition, several Assistant Principals reported instruction in voice (choir at two, voice lessons in one, karaoke in one) and playing musical instruments, including drums, string instruments, and piano. Several sites incorporate the school band program into the after-school program. At two sites, Assistant Principals reported offering visual and graphic arts activities, such as photography and two sites include modeling as an arts activity. Woodshop and quilt-making are offered at one site in the arts component.

Assistant Principals at half of the sites reported offering activities that fall outside of the regular component blocks. Three of the schools have activities for girls that are designed to promote the social etiquette, increase self-esteem, and increase knowledge of issues facing adolescents. One reported conducting an activity like this for boys as well as girls. Another site has an entrepreneur program in which students learn to market and sell a product. One site conducted a leadership club. In addition, in some sites activities were linked to the types of social skills and character-building that the DCPS staff identified in their 21st Century program proposal to the U.S. Department of Education. Students at one site reported writing and performing skits in the drama club that dealt with peer pressure, drugs, and violence; at another site, they gave a dramatic performance on racism for the other program participants. At a site serving some elementary-level students, students in the focus-group mentioned making "friendship certificates" for one another. Although these topics were not mentioned at all the sites, these examples suggest that these connections to important topics are starting to be made.

Appendix B
Protocols

Program Coordinator Interview Protocol

Introduction

My name is _____, and this is _____. We work at the Urban Institute and are part of the evaluation team for the DC 21st Century Community Learning Center program. We are very happy to meet you and to visit _____ [school name] _____ as part of our evaluation. We want to thank you for taking the time to meet with us and learn more about how the program is being implemented at the school.

The purpose of our interview with you today, which should last about 40 minutes, is to understand the ways in which this program is working, as well as what isn't working as well as anticipated, and any lessons you've learned. We will be visiting each of the program's 10 DC sites, and asking the same questions of program coordinators and students. We are not using this information to judge your work, nor to judge the results of the program. At this early stage in the program, we're collecting information to be used to better understand program results.

Because we are pursuing information that can benefit the future implementation of the program, we hope that you will feel comfortable talking candidly to us. All the information that you provide to us will be kept anonymous. Any details about your program will be reported using phrases such as, "In one program," or, "One program coordinator explained that……"

We would also like to request your permission to tape the interview. These tapes will be kept confidential; we would just like to have them to check in case we miss anything, and possibly for training purposes. Taping the interview will help us focus better on what you are saying during the interview.

Do we have your permission to tape the interview?

Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

In addition to running this program, what are your other responsibilities here at the school? How long have you held this (these) position(s)?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

We're going to start with some general questions about the program.

1. What are the goals of the program?

2. Please tell us a little about how the program attempts to achieve these goals.

Probe: What activities currently are offered for students?

3. Have the program goals changed since the program was planned?

If yes, please explain.

4. Has the program been implemented differently from the way it was planned and described in the project proposal?

If yes, why were these changes made?

5. Has the program's Neighborhood Advisory Council been formed and is it functioning?

If yes, how were the members of the Neighborhood Advisory Council chosen?

What role are they playing in the program?

Does this role differ from what had been planned? Please explain.

6. Have other stakeholders been involved in any aspects of the program (such as planning, funding, special activities)? Please explain.

7. How are parents involved in this program?

8. Has the support you've received been adequate to implement the program? (By support, we mean facilities, equipment, supplies, etc.)

If support has not been adequate, please tell me more about this issue.

Probe: Did you try to address this issue?

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS:

Next, I'd like to ask you some questions about program implementation overall.

9. How were students selected to participate?

Probes: Was there a target group?

10. Was there a target number of participants to be served?

11. How many students have you served?

If target not reached, please explain why.

12. Were more students interested in participating in the program than you have been able to serve? Please explain.

13. Are there any prerequisites for student participation in the program (such as good grades or school attendance)?

Probe: Are there any policies related to student participation in the program?

14. How were families notified about the program?

15. How do you organize each student's afternoon?

Probe: How long is each component period? How many periods per afternoon?

16. What is the typical group size?

Probe: Does the group size vary with the different components?

17. Do students have any input about how their time is spent?

Probe: Do students choose "classes" or field trips?

18. In addition to you, who else staffs the program?

Probe: Program assistant? How many teachers (facilitators) are involved?

19. How were the teachers recruited and selected?

20. How does the program staff coordinate efforts?

Probes: Do you meet regularly? Talk informally? Do teachers meet?

21. Do you have any particular concerns about staffing?

Probe: Has program staffing been consistent?

22. Are there any particular factors or issues that affect how this program has been implemented? For example, a history of other after-school programs, the school environment or infrastructure, community issues?

Please tell us:

23. The hours during which the program operates:

23A. Do all the students participate every afternoon? ___ If not, find out the average number of hours per week the typical participant spends in the program: _____

23B. The program start/expected end dates for the after-school program:

23C. Any periods during which the program has not been conducted, such as holidays:

PROGRAM COMPONENT IMPLEMENTATION
Now I'm going to ask you to tell me a little about how the individual components of the program have been implemented.

24. First, what activities are the most popular with the students, and why, do you suppose?

(Note: Below are general headings that should be adapted to fit each site's categories for components.)

TO THE DEGREE POSSIBLE, ask about the following for each component:

1. What are the goals for this component?
2. How is this component implemented?
3. How are activities delivered (i.e., individual, small group; instruction or unsupervised work, etc.)?

Health/sports/recreation:

Educational activities:

ALSO ASK: How are student learning goals set?

Probe: How does the teacher for this component decide what to do?

How are the instructional activities/materials used in the after-school program connected with the in-school academic program?

Arts:

Community service:

Technology:
ASK: Has the technology component been implemented?

If not, why not?

Other components:
25. Are there any other components offered to students in this program? Please describe how they are implemented.

Other activities:
26. Has the program provided any other activities for students that you'd like to tell us about? Please describe.

Probes: workshops on conflict resolution, teamwork, substance abuse, or career awareness/employment; outings; special visits

DATA COLLECTION/EVALUATION
As you know, we're interested in how to measure the impact of the after-school program on students. I have some additional questions for you related to program goals and evaluation.

27. Typically, what percentage of a participant's time in this program is spent on "nonacademic" activities (NOT academic skills development, practice, homework assistance, etc.)?

28. What is this program's view on the impact these activities will have on students?

Probe: Can you explain the value or importance to students of these activities?

29. Are any data being collected on participants, formally or informally, such as student attendance records or a behavior log (find out positive/negative)?

30. Are there other types of data you think would be useful to measure program "successes"?

Probe: How would you "prove" to someone that the program has had an impact? Any project reports? People to whom we should speak?

SUMMARY QUESTIONS
I have some final questions for you. We're almost through.

31. Overall, then, how would you say a student's time spent in this program differs from a student's time spent in school?

Probes: Are students interacting differently with one another? With adults? Are the activities different in form than school activities (i.e., more collaborative)?

32. Which aspects of the program have been most difficult to implement? Can you give examples?

Probes: What obstacles, challenges, or conflicts have you faced?

33. Were these challenges overcome? If yes, how? If no, why not, do you feel?

34. Which aspects of the program have been most successfully implemented? Can you give examples?

Probe: What successes have you achieved?

35. To what or whom do you attribute these successes?

Probe: What factors facilitated these successes?

36. Do you have any suggestions for ways to improve the program? Please explain.

THANK INTERVIEWEE FOR HIS/HER TIME.
Can we call you if we have need to clarify something that was discussed today, or if we have any additional questions?

Student Focus-group Protocol

Introduction

My name is _____, and this is _____. We work at the Urban Institute here in Washington. We are conducting an evaluation of the DC 21st Century Community Learning Center program. We want to thank you for agreeing to meet with us. We are very happy to be at _____[name of school] _____ to talk with you about this after-school program.

We are visiting each of the 10 middle schools in Washington that have an after-school program like this one. We're speaking to program coordinators and to students. Our discussion with you should last 30 minutes.

The reason that we wanted to talk to you is that you, the students, are what this program is all about. We would like to learn about how you feel about this program: what you're getting out of it, what you think is working best and what isn't working as well. We would also like to ask you about what you think you're learning in the program, and what you would be doing if you weren't here, that sort of thing.

We will use the information you give us not to "grade" the program and say whether it's good or not, but to better understand it.

We will keep the information you give us anonymous. That means no one, including your teachers and the program coordinator, will know what a particular student says during this discussion. Instead, we will report that, "Students at one school said..." or "One female student felt that..." Because we're keeping your responses anonymous, we hope you will tell us honestly how you feel. Your thoughts about the program can be very helpful to everyone involved. We ask that you not talk about what each other says during this discussion after we are done, so that we can make everyone comfortable to say what they really feel. Also, this discussion is voluntary: you do not have to respond to any question.

We would also like to request your permission to tape our discussion. We're the only ones who will use these tapes to catch anything we miss. Taping the interview will help us focus better on what you are saying, but again, no one else will be listening to the tapes.

Do we have your permission to tape this discussion?

Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

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1. You are doing a lot of different things in this program. Can you tell us about some of them?

Probe: So the program is divided into different parts: _____, _____, _____. Can you talk a little about these parts?

2. What kinds of things do students do with you in this program?

Probe: Do you play in teams? Do you work together on projects? Do you cooperate on things? Ask for examples.

3. Are these things similar to or different from what you do during the day with other students in school? Can you give examples?

4. What kinds of things do teachers do with you in this program?

Probe: Do you play sports? Do you work individually with them? What else do you do?

5. Are these things similar to or different from what you do during the day with teachers in school? Can you give examples?

6. What caused you to be in this program?

Probe: Did you choose to get involved? Why? What had you heard about the program? Did your mother, father, or someone else decide for you?

7. Does your mother, father, or anyone else in your family ever do anything here, as part of this program?

Probe: Does your mother or father volunteer or help out at all?

8. Does your family know about what you do in this program? Do you talk to your parents about it, or do they ask you?

9. Do you feel safe while you're in this program? Do you feel safe in the school building? Do you feel safe getting home?

10. What do you think you are learning or getting out of this program? Can you give examples of what you mean?

Probe: Have you learned anything new? Do you feel differently? Do you do anything differently or not do something you used to do?

11. Are there any rules that affect whether or not you can be in this program? For example, do you have to attend regular school?

Probe: Do your regular school teachers or anyone else decide whether you can be in this program?

12. What do you do after school on days when this program is not available?

Probe: If you weren't in this program, what would you be doing after school?

13. Do you have ideas about how this program could be improved? Can you explain why you feel this way?

THANK THEM FOR PARTICIPATING

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